



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2005

No. 118

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 20, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KENNY MARCHANT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for 5 minutes.

HONORING THE LATE SIMON WIESENTHAL

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the great promoters of tolerance in our time, Simon Wiesenthal, who we learned has passed away at the age of 96. Mr. Wiesenthal, who spent 4 years in Nazi concentration camps, dedicated his life to seeking justice for those who were unable to seek it for themselves. While Mr. Wiesenthal survived the Holocaust and was rescued by American troops in 1945, dozens of his family members, in-

cluding his own mother, perished at the hands of the Nazis.

Upon his liberation, Mr. Wiesenthal relentlessly and often singlehandedly tracked down over 1,100 Nazi war criminals and saw that they were brought to justice. Without his tenacity, such mass murderers as Adolf Eichmann and Franz Stangl may never have been held accountable for their crimes against humanity.

But Mr. Wiesenthal's legacy is not limited to atoning for the past. He also knew the importance of educating future generations to ensure that similar atrocities would never again take place.

He established the Simon Wiesenthal Center to foster tolerance and understanding. The Center, headquartered in Los Angeles but with offices throughout the entire world, has made great contributions to efforts to combat racism, anti-Semitism, terrorism and genocide. I have had the great privilege, as has Governor Schwarzenegger and both President Bushes, of visiting and working with the Wiesenthal Center over the years to advance their noble mission.

Additionally, the Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance hosts 350,000 visitors annually, including 110,000 children, vividly educating them on the history of the Holocaust and the importance of defeating bigotry and racism in our time. For as Mr. Wiesenthal himself once said, "The history of man is the history of crimes, and history can repeat. So information is a defense. Through this, we can build, we must build, a defense against repetition."

Mr. Speaker, Simon Wiesenthal represented the best of humanity. Born into unspeakable tragedy, he refused to ignore his responsibility to those who, unlike him, did not outlive the Holocaust. His dogged determination was the strongest voice of the victims. Accountability and education, not revenge, were his aims. Mr. Wiesenthal's

greatest lesson, Mr. Speaker, was that even out of such horror, some good can come.

His message of tolerance is one that must continue to be honored, respected and taught. If someone who suffered so greatly can turn his life into a positive force for change, surely the rest of us can take his lesson to heart and never forget the dark past in the hope of building a brighter future.

RESPONDING TO LAST WEEK'S COMMENTS OF MAJORITY LEADER REGARDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, it would be fruitless for any one of us to dedicate himself or herself to refuting every inaccuracy that is uttered on this floor, so I reserve that effort for those of particular public policy significance, and I want to address some comments by the gentleman from Texas, the majority leader, last week as he was justifying the hostage taking that has occurred with the bill that would create an affordable housing fund through Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae's profits. We have, as you know, rules that urge us—not urge us—insist that we refrain from impugning each other's honesty. I will simply note that the gap between what the majority leader said and reality was unusually large even by the standards of political debate. First of all, he quite inaccurately said that nothing in the bill regarding Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac that came out of our committee, the Financial Services Committee, on a 65-5 vote, that nothing in that bill would have provided aid to the people who were stricken by the hurricane. He

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H8103

was, of course, quite wrong. The basic mechanism which we are now talking about putting to the aid of the people who lost their homes was in the original bill. That is, the bill as it came out of committee said that 5 percent of the profits of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac would go to affordable housing. Note that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's profits by everybody's agreement are increased by a series of associations they have with the Federal Government. Everyone acknowledges Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac can borrow money from the public more cheaply than other entities, and we have said that in return for the arrangements that allow that to happen, we will impose certain restrictions on them. It is not a confiscation of private property; it is the recognition that these entities profit and we want something in return. There had been a lot of agreement that we were not getting enough in return. We thought one thing we could do was to take 5 percent of the after-tax profits and put it towards affordable housing.

In the bill that was there, it is true that the bill that we passed before the summer recess did not talk about the hurricane's effects, mainly because the hurricane had not happened, so we are guilty of not having foreseen the terrible events in Katrina. But the basic mechanism was there. What we did do after Katrina was to say, and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) took the lead, the gentleman from Ohio the chairman of the committee and I said, Yes, that makes sense. Let's take this mechanism for affordable housing that was created and let's in this first year in particular focus as the first priority on Louisiana. But the mechanism that was available for us to do that was in the bill. It is simply wrong to say that there was nothing in the bill to help them. The basic mechanism for their aid was in the bill and we were then able to respond to this latest circumstance and send it there.

The second gap between what the majority leader said and reality was when he said, well, these are just negotiations. No, these are not negotiations. This is a kidnapping. This is a hostage taking. There is a legitimate philosophical objection by some of the most conservative Members of this body to the notion of putting these profits to help affordable housing. As I said, it is not just your average private corporation. These are private corporations whose profits are greatly enhanced by a series of governmental arrangements which they are greatly attached to. But we had that battle in committee and those who tried to kill this particular program of affordable housing as part of their profits lost by 53-17. Some of them are still against it. Some of them want some other changes. Let us have some votes on the floor.

From time to time, and I guess we finally have found one thing, Mr. Speaker, we have reached the limit of the

majority's ability to run out the clock. In the past when they have had tough votes, we have waited 3 hours, 2 hours, more time as I have noted than it takes us to evacuate the building in case of a threat when they twist arms and put on pressure. Apparently even they recognize that support for using some of the profits of these private corporations, which profits are enhanced by Federal help, that putting that to affordable housing, particularly now when we have this need for housing in Louisiana, that they could not hold the rollover open long enough to twist enough arms to get there. Well, that is democracy. Let us have the vote on the floor.

I would just add this, Mr. Speaker as I close. There is a lot of concern about how we are going to pay for the aid that we all believe should go to Louisiana. We have one small piece, hundreds of millions, but it is still hundreds of millions, and in most contexts that is not small, we have got a way to deal with the housing needs of those people without in any way impacting the Federal budget. Again, that mechanism was in the bill when it came out of committee. We were then able to adapt it to this situation. That is what the Republican leadership is refusing to allow the House to vote on. If the majority thinks it is a bad idea, I will regretfully wave good-bye to it, but I do not understand why under any theory of democracy a bill that comes out of committee 65-5 with a provision that was supported 53-17 is held hostage, not for negotiations but held hostage because there is a provision that some of the most conservative Members of the body are opposed to philosophically, they do not have the votes to beat it on the floor, they will not abide by democratic principles, they are engaging in this kind of ambush.

BASE CLOSINGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I am here this noontime to introduce a resolution of disapproval regarding the base closing commission which I believe is a flawed document. I believe it is flawed because I think the base closing commission ignored some very, very significant information. But most importantly I think the base closing commission and those at the Defense Department who helped them make these recommendations ignore the fact that we are at war and has ignored the fact that the 130,000 men and women that are in Iraq fighting the good fight, winning the freedom and hope and opportunity for the people there, many of them come from bases around the country, they are citizen-soldiers, they are volunteers, they are people who have been well-trained and well-equipped and are doing a great job but

they are people who come from bases, some of which have been recommended for closure by the base closing commission. I think that does fly in the face of what we believe is the idea of having a strong military, the idea of having a citizen-soldier, the idea of not having a draft because we have these bases that provide the kind of capability when these men and women are called upon to do the hard work as they did in Afghanistan. We see now in Afghanistan millions of people have gone to the polls and voted and they do have democracy there. The same will be true of Iraq very soon, thanks to the citizen-soldiers.

This report is flawed because it does not take into account a Federal law on the books that says that bases cannot be closed without the Governor of the State authorizing the closure of that base. The base closing commission ignored that law. They bypassed that law. I believe there now is in some courts in this country opinions that say that these bases should not be closed unless the Governor of that State agrees to that. But the base closing commission ignored that.

I think it is also important to note that through all of the deliberations and hearings and visits that took place, part of what was ignored is the impact that these bases have in certain parts of the country. They are very, very important, to the economies of local communities, to what they do for local communities, and this will be a terrible blow to many communities around the country. But I think the military aspect is probably the most important aspect that we really need to look at.

I am here today introducing this resolution of disapproval hoping that my colleagues as they have a chance to consider the recommendations that have now been forwarded from the President to the Congress, we now have a period of time to consider these, I hope Members will look at these recommendations, consider the terrible, terrible deficiency that are included in these recommendations and consider the impact that these recommendations will have on our military. Now is not the time to be closing bases around the country. Now is not the time to be eliminating men and women who have done the hard work that they have been asked to do, who have done the good work that they have been asked to do. This is the wrong time. The timing is wrong.

We now as a Congress have the opportunity, I think, to have our say. We have the opportunity to say, those of us that have stood with the President, that have stood with the military, that have made the votes to provide the money to make sure that our military have the kind of capability they have to win the peace and to win democracy in Afghanistan, to win the peace and to bring about democracy in Iraq are saying that this is not the time to be closing bases, Guard and Reserve bases and